



Prevent and Combat Child Abuse: An Overview over five European Countries

**Tagung 'Internationale Perspektiven
im Kinderschutz' (Juli, 2013)**

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This presentation

- Netherlands Youth Institute
- Daphne project 'Prevent and combat child abuse' (2011-2012)
- An overview over five European Countries





Netherlands Youth Institute

The Dutch National centre of Expertise
on children, parenting and families



Main areas of expertise:

- Effective parenting and healthy child development
- Challenges in parenting and child development
- Guidelines, effective interventions and instruments
- Strengthening professionals working with children and families





Prevent and Combat Child Abuse(2011-2012)

- 6 partners
- 5 countries
- 4 workstreams
- 3 types of publications
- 2 sources
- 1 interactive presentation



6 Partners

Nederlands
Jeugd
instituut



*Verwey-
Jonker*
Instituut

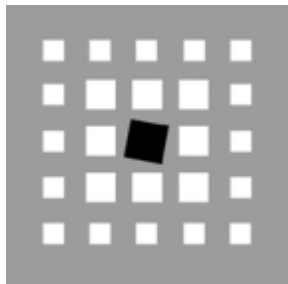


REGIONFÖRBUNDET
ÖREBRO



**Deutsches
Jugendinstitut**

ESIS
CENTRO DE ESTUDOS
PARA A INTERVENÇÃO
SOCIAL



**Család, Gyermek, Ifjúság Kiemelkedően
Közhasznú Egyesület**

Family, Child, Youth Association, Hungary





5 Countries

1. Netherlands
2. Sweden
3. Germany
4. Hungary
5. Portugal



4 Workstreams

- **Workstream 1:** The policy and practice
- **Workstream 2:** A study among parents & professionals
- **Workstream 3:** The manual
- **Workstream 4:** Dissemination
www.youthpolicy.nl



3 Sets of publications

- **Workstream 1:**
Overview report & 5 national reports
- **Workstream 2:**
Overview report
- **Workstream 3:**
 - Manual
 - Executive summary (in all languages)



2 Sources

- Data from ‘Prevent and Combat Child Abuse’:
 - Workstream 1
 - Workstream 2
- Recent Dutch developments





1 Interactive presentation

- The child welfare systems
- National strategies
- Definitions and legislation
- Research
- Universal and preventive services
- Detecting, reporting and stopping of CAN
- Care services
- Integration of services
- Education and training of professionals

- Differences
- Similarities
- Interesting elements
- Evidence



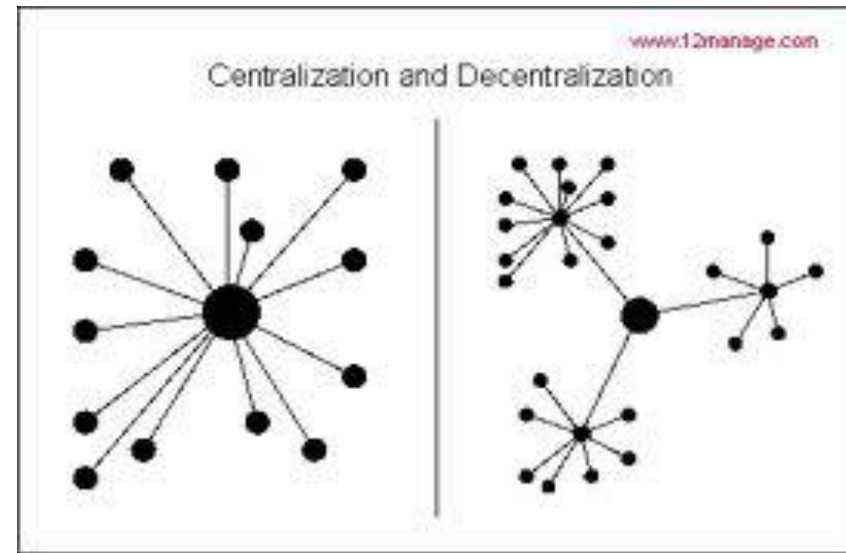


The child welfare systems

- *Germany*: by law, the child authority has to ensure a wide variety of services
- *Hungary*: great difference between policy (+) and practice (-)
- *Portugal*: Focus on the (layered) child protection system
- *Sweden*: strong emphasis on preventive and early interventions (within universal services)
- *The Netherlands*: distinction between general and preventive youth policy and the child and youth social care system

The child welfare systems

- **Great differences** between countries
- **Similarity: decentralisation**
 - of the (preventive & treatment) services
 - to lower (mainly local) governments
 - close to parents





National strategies

All countries:

- have strategies addressing CAN
- CAN is part of wider (governmental) strategies or plans
- All (but Hungary) strategy is framework for lower governments
- Hungary: national strategy, but never implemented



Definitions and legislation

All 5 countries:

- **Broad** definition of CAN
- CAN *not* always *clearly defined* in legislation.
- **Corporal punishment** prohibited by law

Sweden

Germany

Hungary

The Netherlands

Portugal

- CAN in **criminal code**
- **Other** legislation on CAN



Global Initiative to
End All Corporal Punishment
of Children

Since:

?

?

?

?

?



Definitions and legislation

Corporal punishment prohibited by law

Since:

Sweden

1979

Germany

2000

Hungary

2005

The Netherlands

2007

Portugal

2007



Global Initiative to
End All Corporal Punishment
of Children

Definitions and legislation

Differences:

- which **kind** of abuse is included in criminal code
- In **civic code**: Germany, Sweden, The Netherlands
- The **impact** of the legislation is only known in Germany, Hungary and Sweden
- Is legislation enough to tackle child abuse?

Definitions and legislation

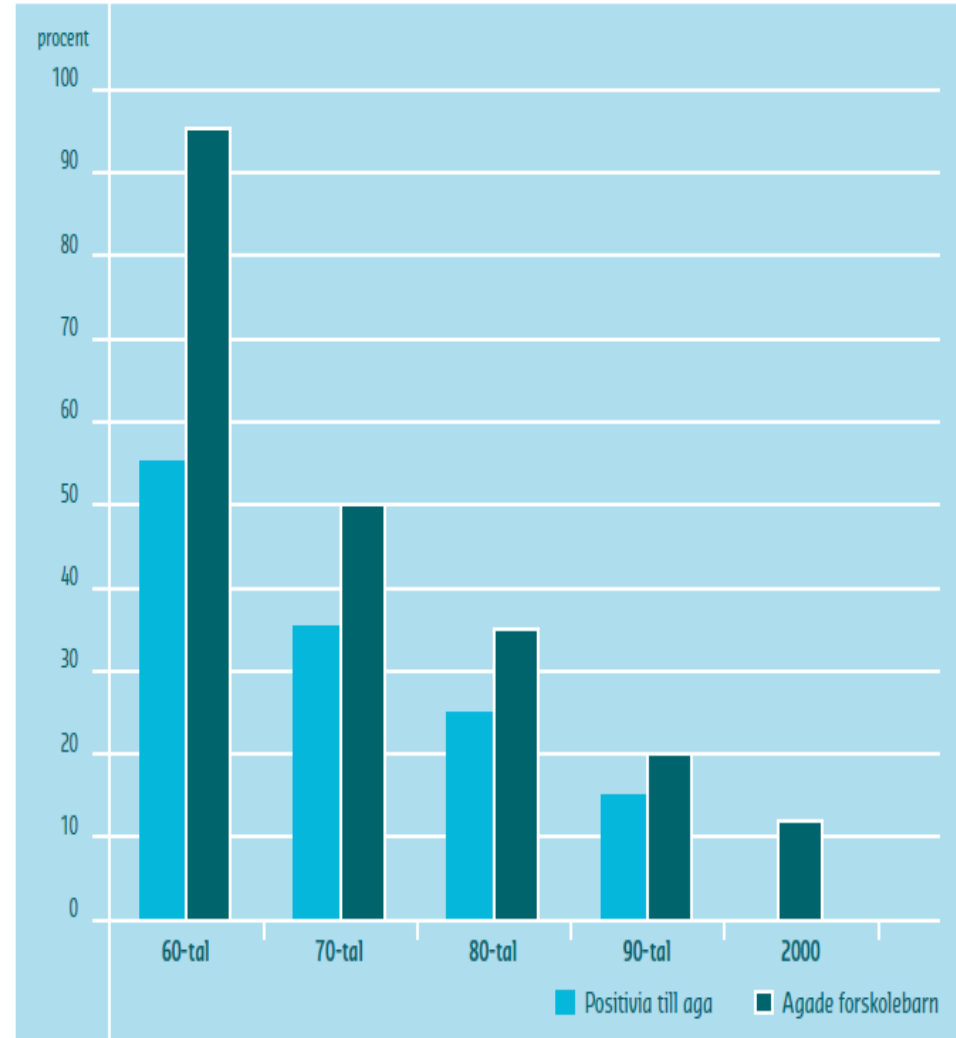
The rate of 'positive attitudes towards corporal punishment' (white bar) and 'the prevalence of corporal punishment' (dark blue bar) in Sweden since the 1960s

Is legislation enough to tackle child abuse?

No, this requires implementation of:

- various kinds of services
- and interventions
- on different levels
- and for diverse target groups,
- such as information campaigns

(Herczog, 2011; Ångman, & Gustafsson, 2011; Bussmann et al., 2009; Svevo-Cianci et al., 2010).





Research

All:

- **Parents**
questioned about having **experienced abuse**
- **Attitude** studies

Differences :

- Data collection **methods**
- Type of **sample**
- Research **topics**
- (Consequently) the **findings**



Universal and preventive services

- *Germany*: The Federal Program ‘Early Prevention’ (2005)
- *Hungary*: Lack of specific targeted services for the population at risk.
- *Portugal*: ECMIJ
- *Sweden*: Interventions for families and children with special needs are undertaken within the framework of the same interventions of the universal services.
- *The Netherlands*: Integration of several universal services in Centre for youth and families



Universal and preventive services

All countries:


- **Wide range** of universal & preventive services
- Services can be universal and/or targeted at children or families **at risk**:
- **3 types of services:**
 1. ECEC
 2. Health care
 3. Parenting support

What elements
of these services
are effective
(in preventing
child abuse) ?



Universal and preventive services

What elements of these services are effective (in preventing child abuse)?

ECEC	Health care	Parenting support
<p>Information sessions</p> <p>(Kindler & Schmidt-Ndasi, 2011)</p> 	<p>Provision & encouragement of pre & post natal care</p> <p>(WHO, 2007)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Univerally accessible parenting programmes • Parenting education • Home visits <p>(Davies & Ward, 2012; WHO, 2010)</p>



Universal and preventive services

Some countries:

- **explicit role/duty** for (trained) universal services in detecting CAN
- possible preventive services include **schools and child welfare services.**
- Germany, Sweden, The Netherlands: integrated (youth and) family centres services



Detecting, reporting and stopping of CAN

All countries:

- **Stopping** abuse: action
in case of child endangerment

Most countries:

- **police** and public **prosecutor** play a role in
investigating whether crimes took place in relation
to reported CAN



Detecting, reporting and stopping of CAN

Differences in & between countries:

- **whom** reporting duties apply to + **where** to make reports
- organisations where CAN is reported to **also** play a role in **investigating** this



Detecting, reporting and stopping of CAN

- *Germany*: Various rules, requirements and tasks for professionals in different fields.
- *Hungary*: Mandatory reporting for professionals, but very limited nr of reports
- *Portugal*: Mandatory reporting for everyone & rather complex legislation for different professionals
- *Sweden*: Mandatory reporting for professionals & special legal representative for child.
- *The Netherlands*: Reporting code came into effect

Is mandatory reporting always effective?



Detecting, reporting and stopping of CAN

Is mandatory reporting always effective?

- Mandatory reporting:
 - **does not** guarantee reporting actually takes places (Gilbert et al., 2009; Berg- le Clercq, 2012)
 - **does not** always have positive outcomes (Ainsworth, 2002; Melton, 2005)
 - **does** have several benefits(Gilbert el a., 2009)



Detecting, reporting and stopping of CAN

Is mandatory reporting always effective?

- Needed:
 - Various kinds of **interventions**
 - Reminding professionals **where to report**
 - More **research** (Gilbert et al., 2009; Hermanns, 2011)



Care services

- *Germany*: Child and youth welfare authority has to ensure a variety of services
- *Hungary*: Lack of services for perpetrators of CAN
- *Portugal*: Focus of services on perpetrators of domestic violence & care services for victims are outlined in legislation
- *Sweden*: Children's houses (Barnahus)
- *The Netherlands*: Child protection is dealt with separately from youth care



Care Services

- Kinds of **'care services'** for:
 - **Victims** of child abuse and neglect
 - Their **families**
 - Some for **perpetrators**
- Services for **victims**:
 - Services for **families**:
 - Practical support
 - Programs for developing (parenting) competencies
 - Treatment
 - Services for **children**:
 - Psychological or psychiatrist services
 - Semi-residential services
 - Placement outside the home





Integration of services

- *Germany*: Emphasis on cooperation in Federal Child Protection Act
- *Hungary*: The duty to cooperate is laid down in legislation
- *Portugal*: CPCJs
- *Sweden*: Many different initiatives of integrating services, including family centres & children's houses
- *The Netherlands*: Also many different initiatives of integrating services, including centres for youth & families, care and advice teams and safety houses.





Integration of services

- Different options:
 - Governments **enforce** or **stimulate** cooperation
 - **Grass root** initiatives of cooperation
- Hampering aspects:
 - Legislation confidentiality & **data protection**
 - **specific codes**, duties or oaths of confidentiality for professionals working with children
 - But mostly: some *exceptions* to these in case of (suspicions of) CAN



What are (other) obstacles when it comes to the integrating services?



Integration of services

What are (other) obstacles when it comes to integrating services?

- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of resources
- Lack of continuation from universal services to (targeted) care services (Berg- le Clercq, 2012)



Integration of services

What are (other) obstacles when it comes to integrating services?

- Turf disputes; agency territorialism & power struggles;
- Defining shared goals and objectives
- Conflicting theories and ideologies about CAN & lack of consensus
- Confusion about leadership roles & the ownership of the case
- Interdisciplinary decision-making is more time consuming
- Feelings of excessive case scrutiny (Lalayants, 2010)



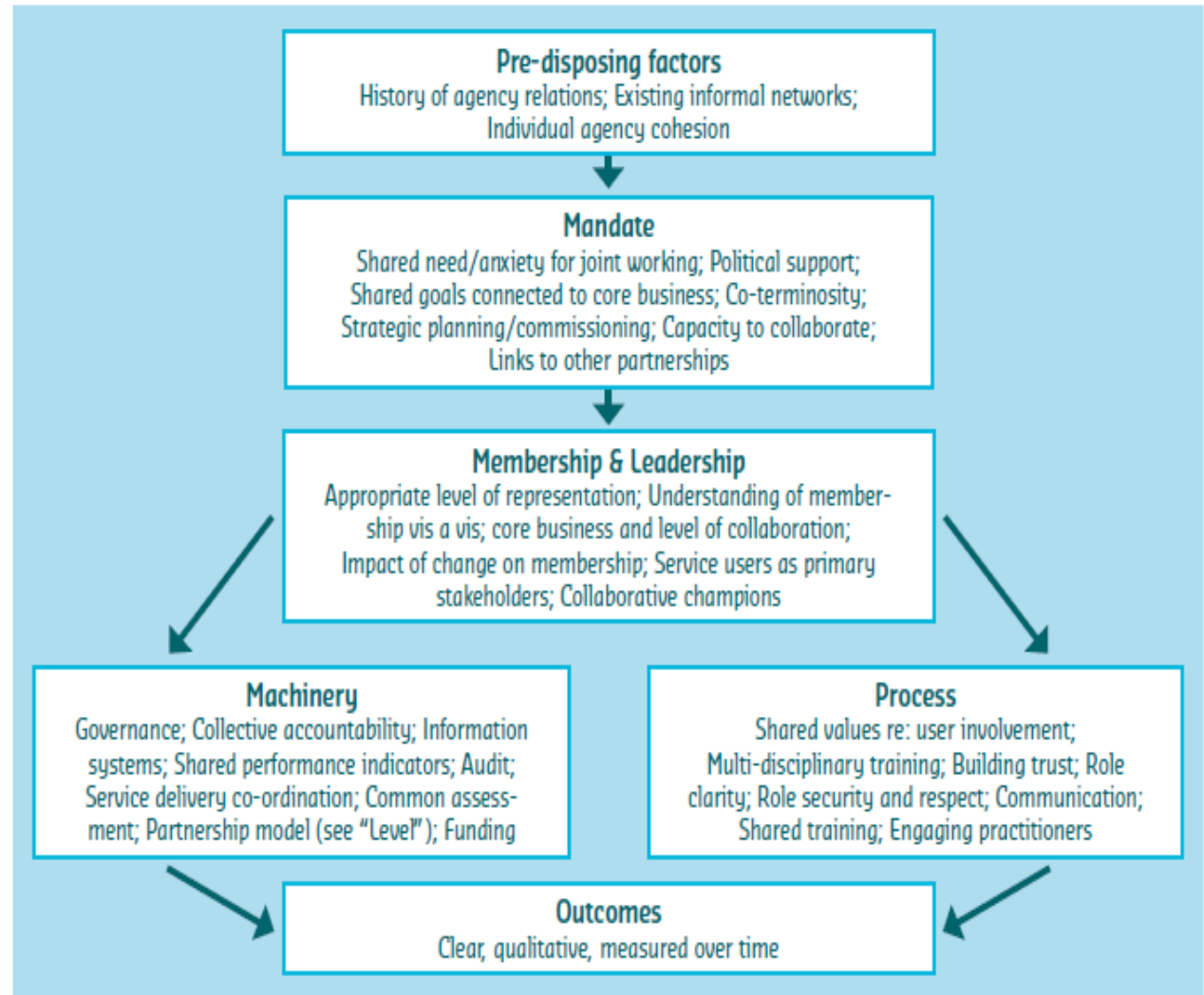


Integration of services

Integration is possible!

Specific products for the integration of services:

- Laws
- Documentation systems
- Information manuals
- Case coordination





Education and training of professionals

All countries:

- A General statement about minimal educational requirements for people working with children = **difficult**
- Qualification of professionals depends on field & function within the system



Education and training of professionals

Part of the initial education?

- Yes: Hungary, Portugal & Sweden (depends on profession)
- Hardly: The Netherlands
- Unknown: Germany

Part of further education?

Yes: all but only very partially in Hungary

What are the necessary competencies of
professionals
for tackling child abuse?



Education and training of professionals

What are the necessary skills of professionals
for tackling child abuse?

- **Prevention:**
 - Skilled in providing educational advice (Hermanns, 2011)
- **Detecting, reporting and stopping CAN:**
 - Decision-making- & problem solving skills (Keys, 2009) ,
 - Knowledge of signs & consequences of CAN (Davies & Ward, 2012)
 - Interviewing qualities (eg London et al., 2005; Hunter, 2011)



Education and training of professionals

What are the necessary skills of professionals
for tackling child abuse?

- **Treatment & out- of home care:**
 - Interpersonal & communication skills:
 - Child-focused skills
 - Carer-focused skills (Darimont, 2005; Davies & Ward, 2012; Keys, 2009)
- **Integration of services:**
 - Role clarity
 - Communication skills
 - Respect for (the contributions of) others (Keys,2009; Damashek et al., 2011; Katz & Hetherington, 2007)

